



CLIMACTERIS PICUMNUS: *Temm.*

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### White-throated Tree-Creeper.

*Certhia picumnus*, Ill.

*Climacteris picumnus*, Temm. Pl. Col. 281. fig. 1.—Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 295.

*New Holland Nuthatch*, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 78.

*Barred-tailed Honey-eater*, Ib. p. 179.?

*Certhia leucoptera*, Lath. Ind. Orn. Supp., p. xxxvi.?

*Le Dirigang*, Vieill. Ois. Dor., tom. ii. p. 127.?

*Dirigang Creeper*, Lath. Gen. Syn. Supp., vol. ii. p. 106. ?—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 260.?

*Dirigang Honey-eater* and var. A., Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 182—183.?

*The Common Creeper*, Lewin, Birds of New Holl., pl. 25.

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THE range of this species is as widely extended as that of the *Climacteris scandens*, being a common bird in New South Wales and the intervening country, as far as South Australia: the precise limits of its habitat northward have not been ascertained; but it does not form part of the Fauna of Western Australia.

The whole structure of this species is much more slender and *Certhia*-like than any other member of its genus, and I observed that this difference of form has a corresponding influence over its habits, which are more strictly arboreal than those of its congeners; indeed so much so, that it is questionable whether the bird ever descends to the ground. It also differs from the *C. scandens* in the character of country and kind of trees it inhabits, being rarely seen on the large *Eucalypti* in the open forest lands, but resorting to trees bordering creeks, as well as those on the mountains and the brushes. I have frequently seen it in the brushes of Illawarra and Maitland, in which localities the *C. scandens* is seldom if ever found. While traversing the trunks of trees in search of insects, which it does with great facility, it utters a shrill piping cry: in this cry, and indeed in the whole of its actions, it strikingly reminded me of the Common Creeper of Europe (*Certhia familiaris*), particularly in its manner of ascending the upright trunks of the trees, commencing at the bottom and gradually creeping up the bole to the top, and generally in a spiral direction. It is so partial to the *Casuarinæ*, that I have seldom seen a group of these trees without at the same time observing the White-throated Tree-Creeper, the rough bark affording numerous receptacles for various kinds of insects, which constitute its sole diet. I have never seen this species near the water-holes, and I feel assured it has the power of subsisting without drinking.

The breeding-season is in September and the three following months. The nest is built of grasses, is warmly lined with feathers, and is placed in the hollow branch or bole of a tree. The eggs are three in number, of a dull white thinly speckled with fine spots of rich brown, and a few larger blotches of the same colour; they are ten lines long by eight lines broad.

Crown of the head and back of the neck sooty black; back olive-brown; wings dark brown, all the primaries and secondaries crossed in the centre by a dull buff-coloured band; throat and centre of the abdomen white, the latter tinged with buff; feathers of the flanks brownish black, with a broad stripe of dull white down the centre; rump and upper tail-coverts dark grey; under tail-coverts white, crossed by several bands of black, each of which being separated on the stem appear like a double spot; tail greyish brown, crossed by a broad band of black near the tip; bill black; the under mandible horn-colour at the base; feet blackish brown.

The female is precisely the same in colour, with the exception of having a small orange-coloured spot just below the ear-coverts, and by which she is at once distinguished from her mate.

The figures are those of a male and female of the natural size.